



South Carolina DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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More Farms Need Training as Produce Safety Inspections Expand in 2021

COLUMBIA — South Carolina farmers should prepare for training and on-farm inspections as more small farms become subject to the Produce Safety Rule.

The Produce Safety Rule is part of the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) passed in 2011. It sets federal regulatory standards for the production, harvest and handling of fruits and vegetables in an effort to prevent microbial contamination and reduce foodborne illnesses associated with fresh produce.

Produce Safety Rule compliance has been phased in over several years. In 2021, all farm size categories will be subject to routine Produce Safety Rule inspections and training requirements. This includes farms with covered produce sales in the following ranges: Large Farms (\$500,000+), Small Farms (\$250,000-\$500,000) and, for the first time, Very Small Farms (\$25,000-\$250,000).

The South Carolina Department of Agriculture (SCDA) has scheduled all six trainings it intends to hold in 2021, with the first two held online (Jan. 27-28 and Feb. 18-19) and subsequent trainings held in Columbia (April 28 and Nov. 16), Greenville (July 13) and Charleston (Sept. 29). Visit agriculture.sc.gov/produce-safety to view dates and a link to register. Sessions will be held in conjunction with Clemson Cooperative Extension, and cover such topics as worker health and hygiene; water safety; soil amendments; and postharvest handling.

Some produce farms may be exempt from the Produce Safety Rule. Visit <https://psrexemption.agriculture.sc.gov> to view exemption requirements and apply. Farms must reapply for exemption every year.

Contact Brooke Horton, SCDA's Produce Safety Outreach Coordinator, at bhorton@scda.sc.gov with further questions.

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